

Sasquatch Stole My Girlfriend

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“Do you smell that?” Skye pushed herself away, but I still had my hands laced around her lower back right where her blonde crust-caked dreadlocks stopped.

“Well, the last time we had any sort of shower was swimming in that pond...” I shrugged my armpit to my nose and inhaled a few times. It dawned on me that I hadn’t had a shirt on the whole week, or for most of the time I was with Skye and I never used to be that type of guy. “I wasn’t going to say anything, but you do kind of smell like -”

“No! Not me. Not you... something else...something... something worse,” she plugged her nose and scrunched up her face. The smell was impossible to ignore or forget – it was the worst thing I’d ever come into contact with. Decomposing bodies of animals, piles of garbage, and rotten eggs were nothing compared to this odor. “It smells like it’s getting stronger too!”

I don’t remember when Skye and I started dating because that’s what happens when you commit to a life of tie-dye and drum circles; we first met at Bonnaroo and when we bumped into each other again at the “Legalize It” protest at the capital, we knew that it was meant to be. Ever since then it’s been tantric sexual exploration, incense-fueled transcendental meditation, and recreational drug use. Which is why we thought that a week long camping trip through Yellowstone would be perfect for us to knock out all three of those activities – especially the last one. By now her past would dictate that she’d move on to the next longhaired intellectual, but I was more than willing to proceed with our happily distracting relationship. Armed with enough illegal and legal drugs to make Hunter S. Thompson envious, we took off in my disappointed but supportive

parents' RV and vowed to become closer with Gaia, each other, and our higher consciousness.

Now on this last night, I looked around trying to find a culprit for that overwhelming offensive odor. Nothing had ever been that bad before. I was reminded of a time when my childhood dog, Rusty, once spewed up a brownish paste that was composed of his dried kibble and own excrement, and I, being the hyperactive and thoughtless youth that I was, ran through the house and fell face first into the pile. The sticky chunks dripped down and dropped into my open and sobbing mouth. But even that – the most repulsive moment of my life - wasn't an accurate comparison. No, this was worse. This was the worst thing a human could possibly imagine; no, it was even worse. It was impossible to imagine because it was inhuman. The stench was unrelenting to the point where I thought I might pass out. "Will!" Skye choked out in an urgent whisper. "Will! Will! Look!" She tugged at my sleeve and began to cower behind me. From the opposite side of our campsite a behemoth of a figure began to trample through the trees and bushes to come closer and closer. Branches and twigs snapped beneath its weight and a dense path was carved behind. Each footstep sent a slight tremor through the ground. It had to be at least eight or nine feet tall and rather thick. The silhouette was jagged and tattered, and each long stride brought it closer and closer. It approached with a slight sense of caution, like an animal testing its ground. I feared it might be a bear, and I had remembered hearing about making yourself seem bigger to scare them away, so I began to scream and wave my arms around. This sudden explosion of movement and sound frightened Skye; she dropped to her knees, plugged her ears, and began letting out a shrill cry between flowing tears. The creature seemed unmoved, and I desperately wished that the light from the makeshift campfire we had made would stretch over to whatever it was that stalked us so I could at least see the thing that would maul me to death and get some sort of hollow validation to my morbid curiosity.

The first thing that I noticed was the face; maybe it's just a natural human instinct to look something in the eye when you first see it. A massive sloping brow hung over two sunken and shadowed orbs; a short, snub nose with flaring nostrils came directly under

them with big, strong cheekbones jutting out to frame the pineapple shaped head. Its forehead was long and tall; double the size of a normal man's, and its mouth was a slender slit without definable lips. The creature was ape-like; the whole body was covered in shaggy, unkempt brown hair, with a muscular yet dumpy stature. It carried itself on two legs with a slight hunch to its back. "Oh my god," Skye wiped away her tears and began to smile. She rose to her feet and looked at the creature, and attempted to approach it. "It's Bigfoot." "Skye! Don't!" I snatched her arm and tried to pull her away. Her hand almost reached the creature's chest and it seemed just as curious about us as we were about it. It didn't flinch or react to our sudden movements and gestures; our voices didn't scare it off. It was inquisitive. I thought about one of those late night Animal Planet specials on that missing link in front of me and remembered the numerous monikers it went by: Sasquatch, Bigfoot, Wendigo, yeti, swamp ape, and skunk ape were the ones that jumped to mind. "Skunk ape" seemed the most accurate as I stared one in the face. Skye turned back to look at me with a twinkle in her eye. "No, Will... it's okay." She raised her hand up to hold it to the center of its chest. "It's Bigfoot. It's just Bigfoot." The Sasquatch studied her hand with interest, it wrapped its own around her wrist and most of her arm and pulled her up to its eye level. Skye's feet hovered above the ground while the Sasquatch conducted its research, and she giggled like a child playing with her father. I stood back; I wasn't sure what to make of Sasquatch at first. After all, this was Sasquatch. This was something that eluded the eyes of anyone credible for centuries and became a cornerstone of folklore. Scientists and hunters had all searched high and low for a shred of evidence and nothing had ever been conclusive. Now here it was holding my girlfriend up by the arm and sniffing at her flower-painted fingernails.

"Uh, hello..." I approached the Sasquatch with hesitation. It lowered Skye to the ground and seemed amazed that I produced noise. Taking the opposite hand that it had used on her, it placed a hold onto my face, squeezing my cheeks with enormous pressure to see if anything else would come out. "Ow!" I cried, pushing it away. Startled, it took a few steps back and raised an arm in defense.

"Oh! Will! You scared him..." Skye took it by the hand and

moved it closer to the fire. "It's okay, Bigfoot. We're not here to hurt you."

I rubbed my face and glared, "It was hurting me."

"He doesn't know any better, he's Bigfoot." She began to pet its hair and it seemed to warm up to her, showing a mangled mess of cubed yellow teeth. "Oh! He likes me!"

"Great," I said with apathy.

"Can you understand me?" She enunciated her words and spoke at a slower pace to try and see if anything would resonate. "Can. You. Under-stand. Me? Do. You. Under-stand. En-guh-lish?" The Sasquatch stared at her much in the same way that she had peered into the unlit grill on our first day here after she had taken her first dozen hits of acid. Inspiration struck her and her face became a massive grin. "Hold on, Bigfoot, wait right here!" Excited, she raced inside of the RV and disappeared for a few moments. I stood there eyeing the creature up and down, and like a mirrored reflection, it did the same to me.

I pondered whether or not this was all just some hallucination from the copious amount of drugs we had ingested over the past week and to be fair, our lifetimes as a whole. Maybe this was some culminating mirage that our minds cooked up in unison to let us know they were beyond repair. Raising my hand, I approached the Bigfoot and grabbed a chunk of its hair. It felt real: coarse, unwashed, but much like my own long, brown beard. I felt its face and while it was rougher skin - like leather - it was still skin. It hadn't occurred to me until now, but I looked down at its feet: after all, this was Bigfoot. Surprisingly, they weren't all that out of proportion, they actually fit with its size. I wondered if this was a boy Bigfoot or a girl Bigfoot, because the hairy chest wasn't giving any indication either way. For a split second, and only a split second, I considered parting some of the flowing strands at the Sasquatch's groin to see, but this perverse thought was interrupted and abandoned when Skye returned to the scene holding a bag of marijuana.

"What is that? I thought we did everything earlier?"

"I always keep a little something hidden away for a rainy day. This is the universal language of nature. The Great Equalizer!" A little voice in the back of my brain told me to ask her what else she'd

been keeping from me, but I ignored it. She began to take it out and roll the contents into the fattest joint I have ever seen. Cheech and Chong would have been jealous as she emptied her entire amount into one enormous masterpiece. The Sasquatch watched with great interest, and when she finished she held it with both hands up in the air and inspected her own craftsmanship while presenting it to the world. I swear it had a heavenly glow, but that could have just been the last of the drugs altering my vision. "Okay," she said putting one end into her mouth. "Now watch closely, Bigfoot." She lit the opposite end, letting the flame really soak into it, taking a few seconds longer than the usual. Skye inhaled deep and exhaled a cloud.

Eager wouldn't even begin to describe my giddiness while I waited for her to hand it to me, but instead she put the end that had just been into her mouth into the Sasquatch's. Without much of lips it just kind of chewed. I'm sure it let its saliva crush down the end, being inexperienced and all. She lit the tip again to make sure it would flow and then in one of the most impressive, but unfortunate sights I have ever seen, Bigfoot inhaled and effectively burnt away the entirety of the joint. It grunted and let the smoke release in one big gust through its nostrils without even holding it in its lungs. The creature dropped to its rear. Again, those yellow cubes poked out from its mouth and it began to let out a deep, raspy sort of chuckling roar reminiscent of a diesel truck starting.

"Aw, man..." I said looking at the extinguished bit curled like a dried up black snake on the ground. "You probably don't have any more, do you?" Not that I needed it, but I had an urge to match what Bigfoot had done.

"That was the last of it," she said with a laugh as she sat down on the Bigfoot's lap. It stared off into the dark and the strong boulders that hung over its eyes lessened with its features softening. Bigfoot was stoned. Skye began to pet its hair again and laugh with it, while I stood on a completely different level.

"Don't sit on that thing's lap, Skye. You'll never get that smell off."

"I like the way he smells," she said rubbing the perimeter of the Bigfoot's ear.

"Come on," I pleaded one last time. "Let's go to bed and let

Bigfoot go back home. We've done enough."

"Home? This is Bigfoot's home, Will. We're in his home. You're his guest. Show some respect." The Sasquatch now had sudden newfound interest in Skye and began to fumble with the collar of her vintage Woodstock t-shirt, pulling it down to expose her chest. I majored in Women's Studies so her never wearing a bra was fun, empowering, and attractive to me. Until that moment I never thought it was an issue. It wouldn't have been an issue if she swatted his hand away or put up a fight. Instead she laughed – she didn't care – she thought it was adorable that this savage was getting a free show.

"Skye! Cover yourself up!"

"Why? He's naked," she said as she took off all of her clothing. Every time other than this it had always been a somewhat arousing visual, but now I wanted nothing more than to go home. I wanted to take back all of the drugs I had ingested after college and find some way to get my life back on track, get a degree and a job I could do something with. I wanted to take back Bonnaroo and "Legalize It." I wanted to take back Skye and return to normalcy. I was twenty-five years old and had nothing but a childhood in the suburbs, an expensive college education, and several lost years to a never-ending altered state. Staring at the most surreal, furthest edge from reality was downright terrifying to me; but my girlfriend seemed to love it.

"Skye, come on." Bigfoot began to touch her breasts. "This is getting weird."

"Don't you just love it, Will? He's so free. He's so disconnected from the world. Society wants him, but he only goes up to society when he wants to, man. He must have sensed my spirit. It's like he knows how bad mankind has made this world so he exists independent of it. With nature. With Gaia!" Bigfoot ran its hand down her flat stomach. "Bigfoot knows how to live. Bigfoot's got it right, man. All you do is try to tell me maybe we should slow down and not smoke so much, or maybe we should stop living in the RV. Bigfoot would never say that, would you, Bigfoot?" The Skunk Ape stared at the stars like they were speaking in its native tongue.

"I'm going to bed," I said without her noticing. She didn't

notice that I walked away either. She just kept rambling about how Bigfoot had it all right. How Bigfoot was this and that. I went inside of the RV and tried to tune her out, but I could hear her giggling and it grunting all night long.

When I woke up in the morning I went outside and didn't see Bigfoot or Skye anywhere. The fire had been long extinguished and burnt out, and inside the pit was only a fragile pile of dust. I had a lot of cleaning up to do. I looked at where they were and found Bigfoot tracks in the mud, and a faint lingering scent of the night before. The joke was on her though, I told myself; because I'm pretty sure Bigfoot's a registered Republican.